

**ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF PORTIONS OF EAST CARSON
AND NEARBY STREETS, SAN ANTONIO,
BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

by

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INTRODUCTION

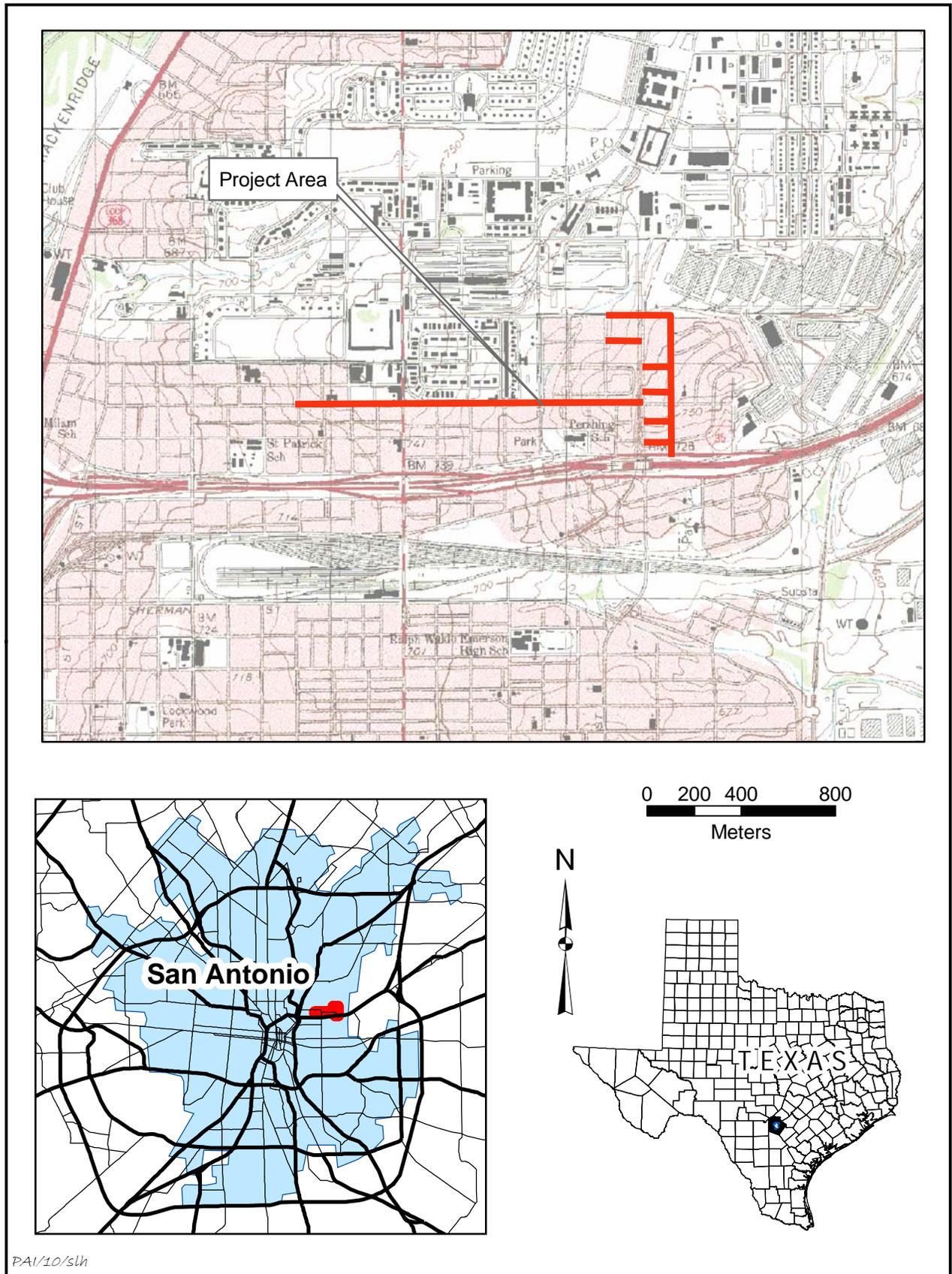
On February 25, 2010, personnel from Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted an archeological survey within existing right of way for proposed improvements on East Carson Street and nearby streets in the City of San Antonio, Texas (Figure 1). The City of San Antonio plans to apply for a grant issued by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to fund the proposed undertaking. The proposed undertaking includes two components: installing a 12-inch water line along East Carson Street between North Walters and North Palmetto Streets (1.6 km) and repaving seven streets surrounding North Walters Street (Figure 2). Repaving will occur along Hood Street between Ash and Ervin Streets; Bee Street between Ash and North Walters Streets; Coleman, Gray, Reno, and Jim Streets between North Walters and Ervin Streets; and Ervin Street between the Interstate Highway 35 access road and Hood Street. The total linear distance of these streets is 1.2 km. The depth of impacts associated with these improvements will be less than 1 m, except for the water line, which will be installed at greater depths.

Figure 1. Project location map.

Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the project area.

All work was done in accordance with the Antiquities Code of Texas, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the City of San Antonio's Historic Preservation and Design Section of the Unified Development Code (Article 6 35-360 to

Figure 1



35-634). The survey was conducted under Texas Antiquities Permit No. 5527.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Bexar County is in south-central Texas and straddles the Balcones Fault Zone, which separates the Edwards Plateau from the Blackland Prairie of the Gulf Coastal Plain to the southeast (Arbingast et al. 1973:6; Bureau of Economic Geology 1983). The Edwards Plateau margin has been heavily dissected by stream downcutting and headward erosion, resulting in a rugged landscape of limestone hills and canyons, whereas the Blackland Prairie is typically rolling tall grasslands underlain by soft limestones, marls, and chalks.

The climate of the Blackland Prairie region can be classified as modified humid subtropical with Gulf-influenced hot summers and continental-influenced mild winters; the Edwards Plateau region is subtropical steppe with low summer humidity (Natural Fibers Information Center 1987:10–12). Summer temperatures can exceed 100°F, and freezing temperatures can occur during the winter months, although such extremes are more frequent in the Edwards Plateau region. The mean annual precipitation for Bexar County is 29.1 inches (739 mm). Rain falls throughout the year, with slight peaks in the late spring and early fall months (Natural Fibers Information Center 1987:49).

Like the landscape and climate, the biota of Bexar County differs east to west, although there is geographical overlap of some species. The flora and fauna of the Edwards Plateau are defined as Balconian, while those of the Blackland Prairie are characterized as Texan (Blair 1950). The project area is situated in uplands along the western side of the Salado Creek valley. The uplands are mapped as Tertiary gravels

(Bureau of Economic Geology 1983). With no natural watercourses nearby, there is no mapped Quaternary alluvium in or near the project area. Soils in the project area are variations of Houston Black gravelly clay (Taylor et al. 1991).

PREVIOUS INVESTIGATIONS

A file search of the Texas Historical Commission's Archeological Sites Atlas revealed no known archeological sites in the immediate project area or within 1 km of it, despite the fact that Fort Sam Houston, immediately to the north and east, has been previously surveyed. The Texas Department of Transportation's Texas Historic Overlay (THO) contains maps from 1883 and 1889 showing the project area as lying just east and south of the military reservation now called Fort Sam Houston. The 1889 map shows streets following the modern road grid throughout the area. THO also contains the 1927, 1930, and 1953 USGS topographic maps showing the modern road system and expansion of Fort Sam Houston eastward to encompass the area immediately north of the project area. Based on the results of the file search and the upland setting, the potential for Native American archeological sites is very low. The potential for historic archeological sites is higher, but only on lands adjoining the existing right of way; the potential within the right of way is low because the existing street grid has been in place for a long time.

METHODS AND RESULTS OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Field investigations consisted of a 100 percent pedestrian survey and surface examination across the entire project area. This consisted of walking and visually

inspecting the areas of the proposed improvements. Surface visibility was poor because of commercial and residential development. The ground surface and the deposits below it have been heavily impacted by utility lines, sidewalks, drainages, roadways, and residential and commercial development.

Survey was initiated along East Carson Street from North Walters Street to Palmetto Street. Here, a 12-inch water pipe will be placed beneath the roadway inside the existing right of way. Residential development and a few commercial structures adjoin this entire stretch of the project area. The right of way contains the paved street, buried and overhead utility lines, intersecting roads and driveways, and sections of landscaped parcels. Because of the high level of disturbance, no subsurface tests were excavated along East Carson Street; no evidence of archeological sites was observed on the surface in the existing right of way.

Next, the survey examined Hood Street from Ervin to Ash Streets at the north end of the project area. Here, residential development occupies the entire south side of the road right of way. Fort Sam Houston is adjacent to the north side of the right of way. This area contains a narrow strip of grass along the length of the project area. Buried and overhead utility lines are inside the right of way on both sides of Hood Street. Because of the high level of disturbance, no subsurface tests were excavated here; no evidence of archeological sites was observed on the surface in the existing right of way.

The survey then examined Ervin Street along the east side of the project area. Residential development occupies both sides of the road, and there are several commercial buildings also located here. Buried and overhead utility lines run along both sides of the right of way. Sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, and intersecting roads are located throughout this section of the project area. Because of the high level of

disturbance, no subsurface tests were excavated; no evidence of archeological sites was observed on the surface in the existing right of way.

The last areas surveyed were located along sections of Bee, Coleman, Gray, Reno, and Jim Streets, all of which intersect Walters or Ervin Streets. Residential development, along with limited commercial development, adjoin each of these areas. These areas have also been disturbed by buried and overhead utilities, sidewalks, intersecting roads, and landscaping. Because of the high level of disturbance, no subsurface tests were excavated; no evidence of archeological sites was observed on the surface in the existing right of way.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Disturbances associated with existing infrastructure and residential and commercial development have significantly impacted all of the project area. The fully disturbed nature of the existing right of way, coupled with the very low potential for Native American or historic archeological sites, indicate that the work proposed by the City of San Antonio will not impact any cultural resources that are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or designation as State Archeological Landmarks. No further archeological work is recommended.

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